

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER  
LISTED

MAR 08 2006

## National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A) Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-9000a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

### 1. Name of Property

Historic name Krueger Building

Other name/site number Opera House

### 2. Location

Street & number 811 Fort Street

☐ not for publication

City or town Hays

☐ vicinity

State Kansas

Code KS

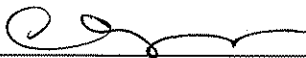
County Ellis

Code EL

Zip code 67601

### 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination  
☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of  
Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  
☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  
☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
Kansas State Historical Society

1/23/06  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional  
Comments.)

Signature of commenting official /Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National  
Register

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

☐ removed from the National  
Register

☐ other, (explain:)

Krueger Building  
Name of property

Ellis County, Kansas  
County and State

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private  
☐ public-local  
☐ public-State  
☐ public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)  
☐ district  
☐ site  
☐ structure  
☐ object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**  
0

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter Categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade: Department Store

Recreation and Culture: Music Facility

Government: Courthouse

Social: Clubhouse

Commerce/Trade: Warehouse

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Work In Progress

Vacant/Not In Use

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian: Italianate

Late Victorian: Second Empire

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone: Limestone

walls Stone: Limestone

Walls Brick with limestone trim

roof Asphalt

other Brick

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Name of Property Krueger Building

County and State Ellis County, Kansas

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Performing Arts

Entertainment/Recreation

### Period of Significance

1877-1909

### Significant Dates

1877

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

William Bryon-Contractor

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS): Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ Previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka KS

County and State Ellis County, Kansas

**Acreage of Property** Less than one.

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

Figure 1 consists of four diagrams, labeled 1, 2, 3, and 4, each representing a 1000m² plot layout. Each diagram is divided into three main sections: Zone, Easting, and Northing. The Zone section is a single row of 10 cells. The Easting section is a grid of 10 rows and 10 columns. The Northing section is a grid of 10 rows and 10 columns. Diagram 1 shows a specific layout with numbers in the Zone and Easting sections. Diagrams 2, 3, and 4 show alternative layouts.

Diagram	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	1 4	4 7 1 0 7 0	4 3 0 2 2 3 0
2			
3			
4			

☐ See continuation sheet

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

Name/title Kelli Hansen

Organization Liberty Group, Inc.

Date      October 1, 2003

Street & number 308 West Mill Street

Telephone (785) 434-2777

City or town Plainville

State KS

Zip code 67663

Submit the following items with the completed form:

## Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

name Liberty Group, Inc.

street & number      308 West Mill Street

telephone (785) 434-2777

city or town Plainville

state

KS

zip code

67663

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas

## Narrative Description

The Krueger Building (c. 1878- 1879), also known locally as the Opera House, is located at the southwest corner of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Fort Street in Hays, Ellis County, Kansas (population 20,000). The building measures approximately 75 feet north to south and approximately 52 feet east to west. The east elevation facing Fort Street is currently and was originally the main entrance to the building. The height of the building is approximately 42 feet.

The Opera House is a three-story, mansard roofed, rectangular building with a basement; it was constructed of Fort Hays limestone from a quarry located three miles to the west. Built in 1878-79, the Opera House was a classic example of Second Empire architecture with regularly-spaced arched windows on the second floor, third floor triangular, pedimented dormers with divided sash windows, and a distinctive mansard roof with cornice brackets.

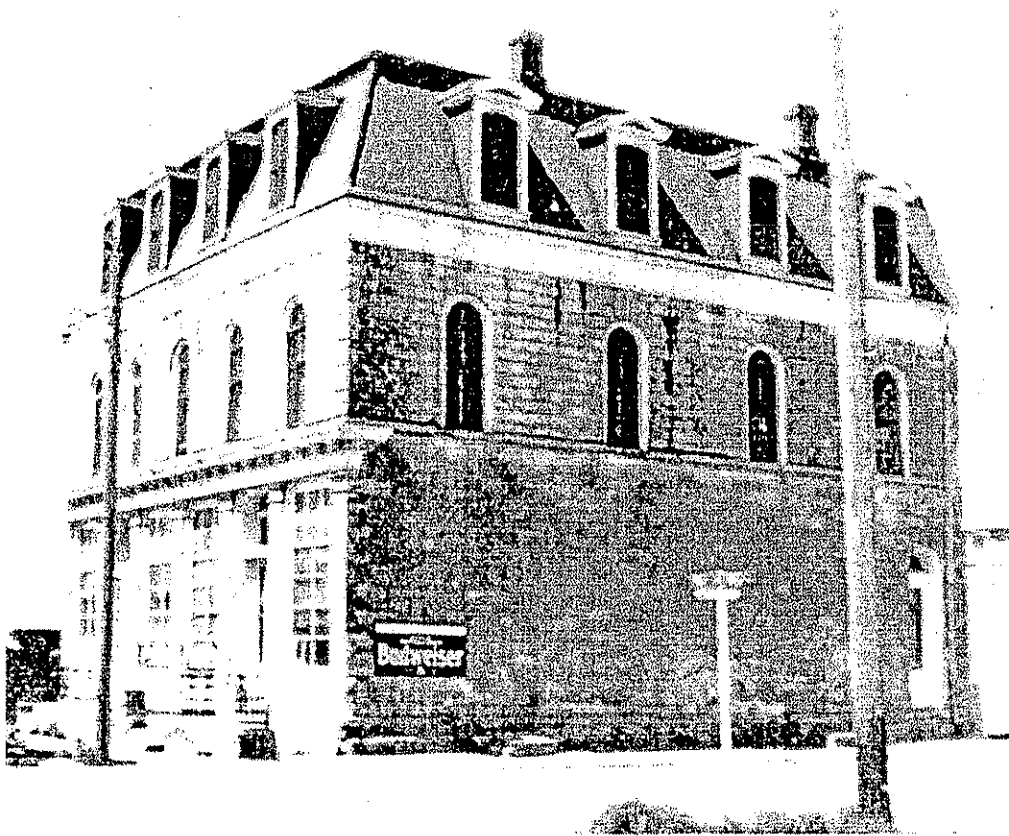


Figure 1. East façade, north elevation, c. 1940

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas

In 1954, the building was “modernized” with the application of a buff-brick façade on the east and north sides. The façade covered the building’s second floor 2 arched windows and first floor doorways and windows. Triangular pedimented dormers, eave and cornice brackets and paired entry doors were also removed at that time. The original paired entry doors and exterior cornice brackets were stored in the building. The building’s four chimneys were reduced and capped off.



Figure 2. Northeast elevation prior to brick façade removal, c. 2002

In September 2002, the brick façade that covered two sides of the building for nearly 50 years was removed, exposing the original limestone exterior, second floor arched windows, and first floor doorways and window openings. Upon removal of the brick façade on the north and east elevation, the

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas

original limestone was found to be in good condition. There are some areas along the bottom where water had been wicking that were showing signs of deterioration and a few cracked stones in the wall itself. Because the façade was not extensively anchored to the historic stone, the stone was not damaged.

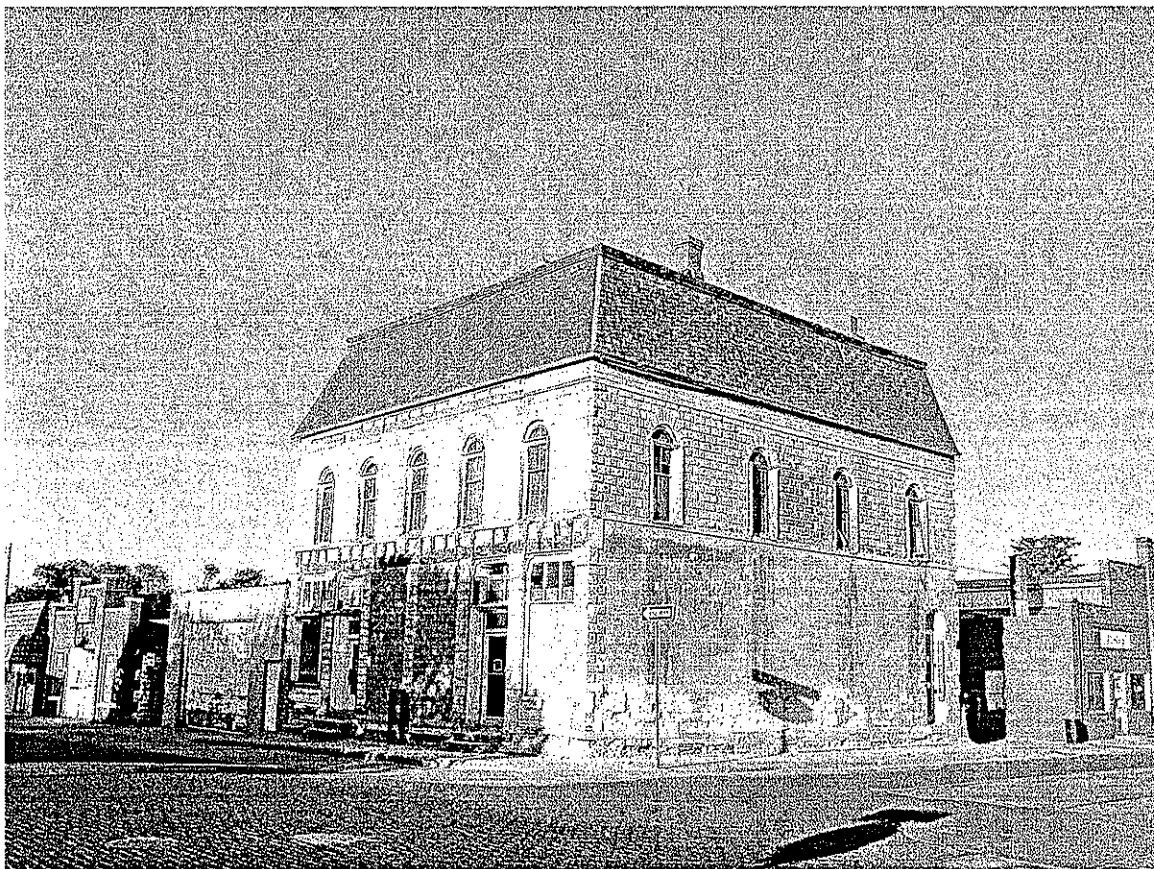


Figure 3. Northeast elevation during brick façade removal, c. 2002

While the exterior has undergone many reversible changes, the coffered period interior has remained surprisingly untouched. The first floor is one large room with a classic Italianate centered arched support. The ceiling is completely paneled in wood and likewise is period in age and design. Severe damage to the ceiling and floors has occurred in the northwest corner next to the original, operable elevator due to roof leakage. This poses the greatest immediate threat to the building. All the floors are maple and are in overall good condition except in the northwest area. The staircase is original and is in disrepair but clearly exhibits a decorative aesthetic consistent to the period.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas

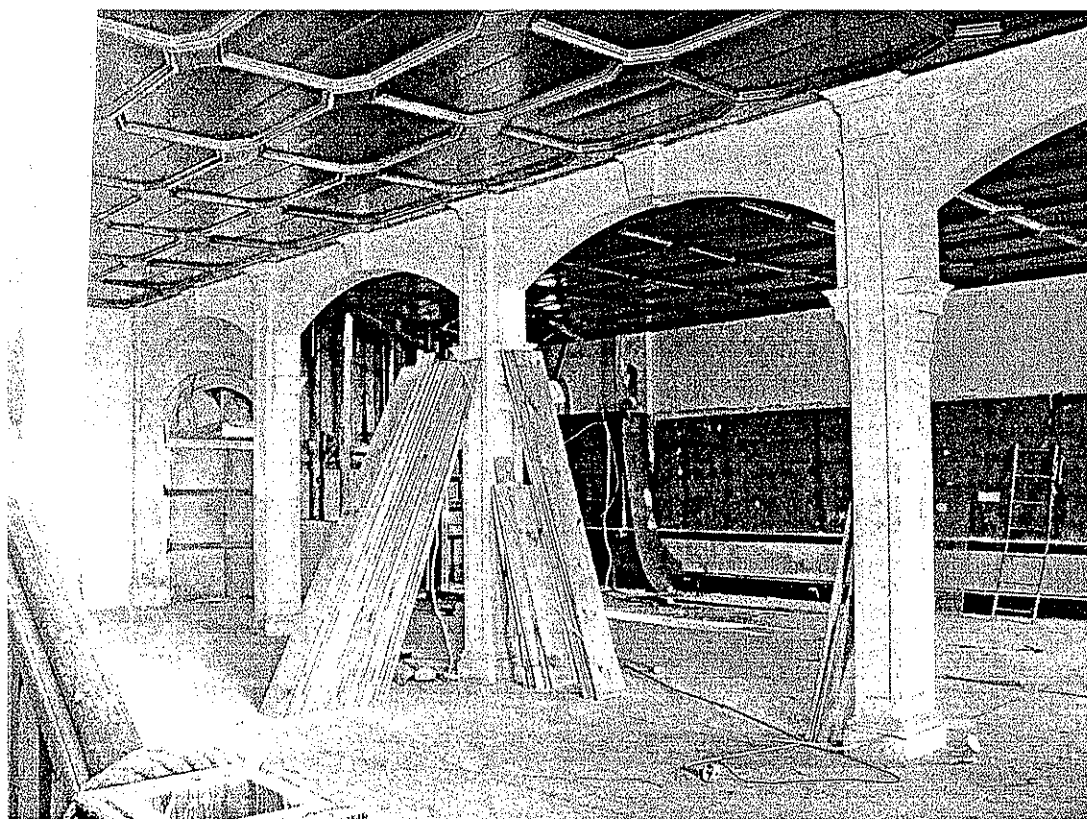


Figure 4. 1<sup>st</sup> floor, northwest view, c. 2002

The second floor is sectioned off into several large rooms. The rooms feature 13-foot tall ceilings with original woodwork and transomed doors. The third floor is characterized by the building's distinctive mansard roof. This roofline accommodates a full upper story. Regularly spaced and boarded up openings are present on the steep lower slope of the roof where triangular pedimented dormers with divided sash windows were previously located. Like the second floor, the third floor has also been subdivided into four rooms.

Many of the architectural features of the building, such as the paired entry doors and eave and cornice brackets, were removed in 1954 and stored on the third floor with future restoration in mind.



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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas

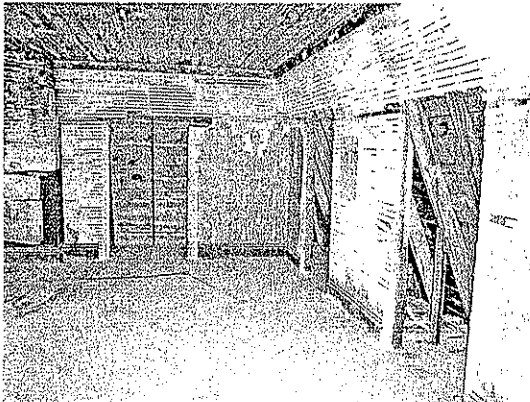


Figure 5. 3<sup>rd</sup> floor boarded up openings where triangular pedimented dormers were located, c. 2002

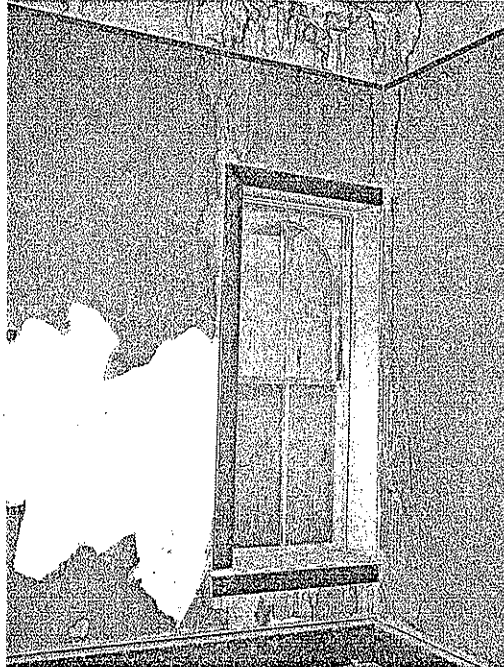


Figure 6. Original 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, divided sash arched windows hidden by exterior brick façade, c. 2002

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas



Figure 7. Original paired entry doors and window screens that are stored on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, c. 2002



Figure 8. Exterior eave brackets stored on 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, c. 2002

In 2002, some necessary precautions were taken to stabilize and repair the roof of the building. Severe damage to the ceiling and floors had occurred in the northwest corner next to the original operable elevator. A temporary patch was applied to the roof to prevent further deterioration of the interior.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas

### Narrative Statement of Significance

The Krueger Building (c. 1878- 1879), also known as the Opera House, is being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A for its historical association with the growth and development of Hays.

#### Hays- Early History

The earliest history of Hays dates back to October 11, 1865, when the United States government ordered the establishment of several military posts in the west, including Fort Fletcher near present-day Hays. Upon the construction of the railroad, the fort moved to the location where the blockhouse and guardhouse now stand. On July 4, 1867, the first United States flag was hoisted on this 7,500 acre military reservation. On April 7, 1889, the Fort Hays Military Reservation was deactivated and years later, Congress granted the military reservation to the State of Kansas on March 28, 1900.

The railroad reached the site of Hays on October 16, 1867. The first steps taken to organize Ellis County were completed in Hays on October 28, 1867, and the town was established on November 23, 1867. In 1885 the city incorporated under the name of "The City of Hays" and in the first year attracted a population of 1,000.

In 1879 a fire swept the downtown area destroying the first hotel, the Gibbs House, as well as many other places of business. The settlers began quickly rebuilding only to have another fire in 1881 destroy a half dozen additional buildings.

This became a turning point in the civilization of Hays and marked the time in which the Krueger Building was constructed. Henry Krueger came to Hays searching for a better way of life. He built the three-story limestone building to house his general store on the first floor and to provide a place where social gatherings, dances and performances could be held, offering up a different form of entertainment for the early settlers other than the vast number of saloons.

#### Historical Significance of the Krueger Building

The Opera House was constructed in 1878-79 by William Bryon for pioneer merchants Henry Krueger and his brother Fred. Both brothers had attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and many felt this grand building demonstrated the talent and skills they learned. They wanted a building in which they could have a general store on the first floor to support themselves and their families. They also recognized Hays needed a place where musical performances, dances, and church socials could be held as the majority of the social life centered around the saloons, drinking and gambling. In 1878, a grocery and general store opened on the first floor. The store served Ellis County, whose population was less than 2,000.

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Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas

In March 1877, a group of local amateur actors organized by Professor Rufus Spitler of the Hays Public Schools, identified itself as the Hays City Amateur Dramatic Club, performing at the Court House. In June 1877, the group assumed the name "The Hays City Amateurs", enlisting some of the most influential men and women as members. Members included: Simon Motz – local postmaster and first mayor who later became the editor of the local newspaper; "Con" Henley – local Shakespearean scholar and grocer; and Captain Jack H. Downing, editor of the Ellis County Star.

"The Eastman Opera House," showcasing mainly home-talent Shakespearian plays and operas, occupied the second floor. Traveling professional musicians made the Opera House their last stop between Abilene and Denver, packing the house at fifty cents a ticket for standing room at the sides and rear of the room. Best known of all was the Louie Lord Players who catered to the popular taste of the time with "East Lynne" and "Ten Nights in a Barroom." Also performed at the Opera House was one of Gilbert & Sullivan's best-known operettas, "The Mikado, or The Town of Titipu." This English National Opera, set in a British seaside resort is still being presented today around the country. Hays had its own Shakespearean scholar, "Con" Henley, who according to local legend, could quote any line from any of the Bard of Avon's comedies and dramas.

Another local dramatic association, the Mystics, began in the 1880s. One could believe the short-lived success of the Hays City Amateurs triggered the formation of this group. Opening in 1882, the Mystics also included many well-known citizens; they went beyond the local talent level and were touted as one of the best dramatics clubs in the state. Their local productions caused many Hays citizens to patronize local performances rather than those of the traveling troupes. A *Hays Daily News* article even suggested many traveling troupes avoided Hays because of the Mystics. The Mystics presented melodramatic attractions such as "The Lady of Lyons" and "Richelieu" in Hays and several small towns such as Ellis and WaKeeney about once a month for the three years the home talent cast remained together.

The second floor is also where all the dances and church socials were held. The third floor was a practice room for the town band. The musicians had a little room at the rear of the floor for their private stock of alcohol during prohibition days. The third floor had also served as Ellis County Courthouse from 1896 until 1898, after a fire destroyed the courthouse.

Throughout the years, Henry and Fred Krueger held many prominent positions in the community aside from operating their retail store. In 1878, Fred Krueger was the County Treasurer and in 1894 he became the postmaster, signifying he was a well-respected, hard-working members of the community.

The Essex Club, the elite, members-only social organization of the era, bought the building in 1909 for their clubhouse for \$12,000. Established in 1902 and named in honor of a well known English club, the Essex Club began with twelve businessmen and was destined to become the commercial club of the city. Several lodges began in the Essex Club and some of the organizational meetings of the present Chamber

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Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas

of Commerce were held there. The club grew from the founding twelve members to an enterprising group of 36 members.

Under the auspices of the Essex Club, the first floor was the dancing hall with a hard maple dance floor that still exists today. The second floor was partitioned and converted into a library (with each member contributing his best literature), a billiard room with ping-pong, card tables and a piano, and bathrooms. The third floor was used as banquet facilities. The strictest rule of the organization was the forbiddance of liquor and gambling in the clubhouse. Their mission was not only social amusement but also the encouragement of the advancement of the town and county. The Essex Club sold the building in 1922 to Carl Wolf to expand his rapidly growing hardware business.

Carl H. Wolf was born in Katherinstadt, Russia, and in 1874 at the age of four came to America with his family, which settled on a farm near Catherine. He married Adeline Schmidt in 1895 and moved to Hays in 1898. Mrs. Wolf has the distinction of being the first child born in Catherine and was baptized by the post chaplain at old Fort Hays. Her parents settled at Catherine with the first Germans who came over from the Volga region in 1876. Carl became a clerk in the office of the probate judge a very short time before establishing a hardware business. He remained in the hardware business, expanding into the Krueger building in 1922 as Midwest Candy and Tobacco Company, a grocery/hardware store.

His son Carl J. Wolf joined the business after returning to Hays from serving in the Philippines. In 1954, Carl J. sold the building and business to E.J. Dreiling, his brother-in-law, who then "modernized" the exterior by adding the brick façade and a warehouse to the south side. Carl H. Wolf, Dreiling's father-in-law, remained in the business as a "silent partner." Carl H. Wolf died on January 8, 1952. Carl H. Wolf's obituary stated, "Mr. Wolf was interested in everything which would improve Hays and make it a better place in which to rear a family. It was he who bought the first ad in the News when it became a daily paper."

Until March 1986, the Opera House was used as a distribution center for Midwest Tobacco & Candy Co.; it has remained vacant since that time.

In January of 2001, the building was purchased by Liberty Group to include in the revitalization of downtown Hays and remains vacant at this time.

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National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9 Page 10

Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas

### Major Bibliographical References

Many resources were used while compiling information such as Sanborn insurance maps, telephone directories, business directories and photograph files from the Kansas Room in the Hays Public Library. Other sources include:

Harris, Cyril M. Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977).

"Building of New Krueger Building," Ellis County Star, October 18, 1877.

"Band Concert at New Opera House," Hays City Times, May 29, 1886.

"Krueger, Henry and Brothers," Hays, Kansas, Business Records, 1879-1906.

"Old Landmark to be Remodeled," Hays Daily News, May 4, 1954.

"Nails, Wood of 83-Year-Old Krueger Building Like New," Hays Daily News, July 7, 1954.

"Building With Interesting History Sold," Ellis County Star, January 5, 1922.

Obituary, Carl H Wolf. Hays Daily News, January 8, 1952.

"Celebrate 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Hays Couple Wed 50 Years go in Las Vegas, NM," The Hays Daily News, October 15, 1945.

Reflections: Ellis County Kansas 1867-1998: A Pictorial History of People, Places and Events. (Hays: Hays Daily News, 1998).

Foulks, William G. Historic Building Facades: The Manual for Maintenance and Rehabilitation. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997).

The Story of the Early Life of Fort Hays and of Hays City. (Old Fort Hays Historical Association, Inc., 1959).

Tholen, Herman J. Early History of Ellis County, Rome and Hays. 1961.

Forsythe, James L. Lighthouse on the Plains: Fort Hays State University, 1902-2002. (Hays: Fort Hays State University, 2002).

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 9,10, 11 Page 11

Krueger Building  
Ellis Co., Kansas

Parker, William D. A Record of the Theater in Hays, Kansas and the Surrounding Area, 1869-1969. A thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty of the Fort Hays State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts, 1977.

### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is located on Lots Thirty-two (32), Thirty-four (34) and Thirty-six (36), Block Twenty-six (26) in the Original Town of Hays City, now the City of Hays, Kansas.

### Boundary Justification

The boundary contains all property historically associated with this building.

### Photographs

The following information is consistent for all photographs:

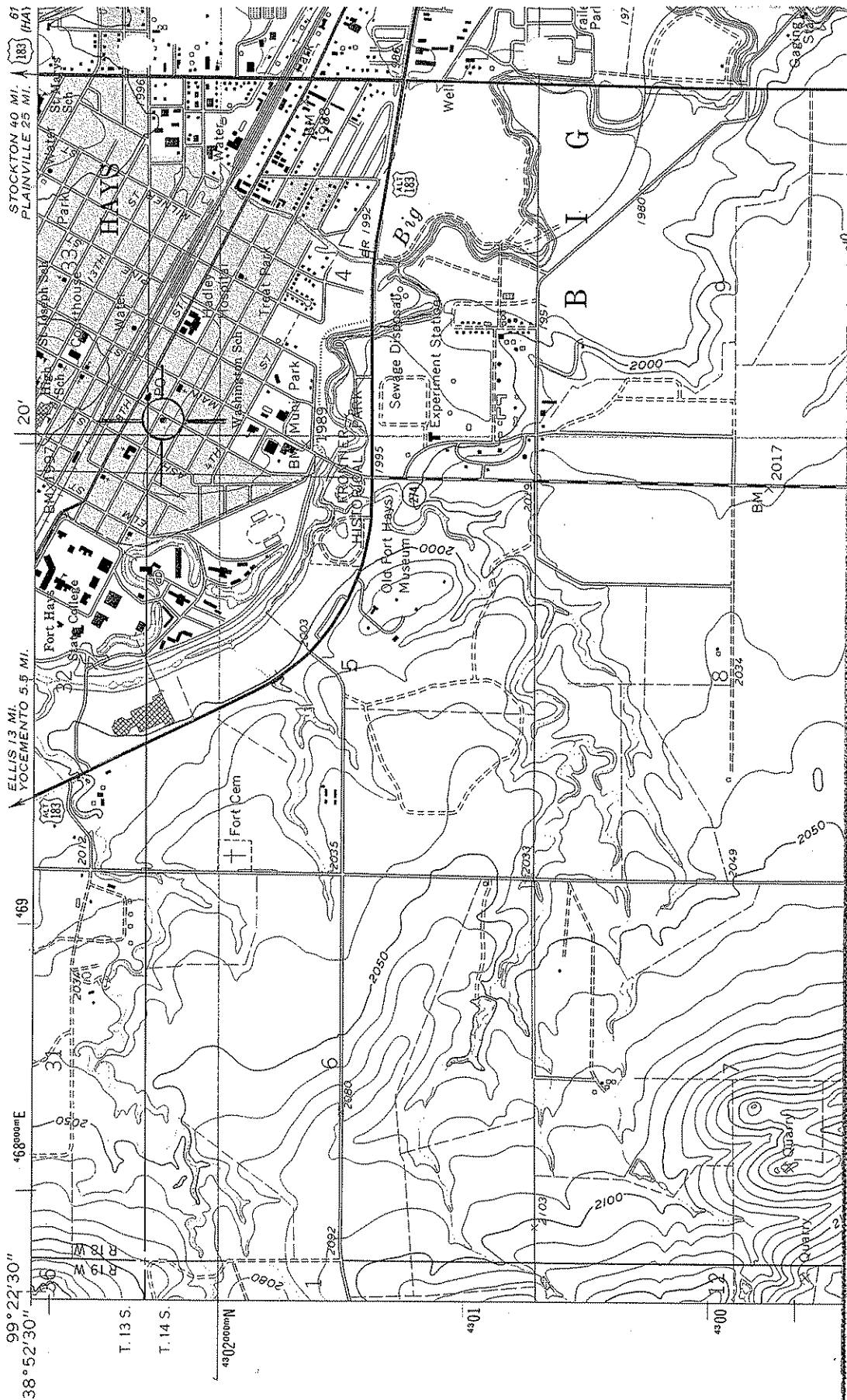
- 1) Krueger Building
- 2) Ellis Co., Kansas
- 3) Photograph by Martha Hagedorn-Krass
- 4) August, 2003
- 5) Negative on file at Kansas State Historical Society

The following information is specific to each photograph:

<u>Photo #</u>	<u>Description of View</u>
1.	View from the east.
2.	View from the north.
3.	View of side (north) elevation entrance from the east.
4.	View of first floor arched supports.
5.	View of interior door trim.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

8161 NW  
(YOCEMINTO)



Krueger Bldg.  
Ellis Co., Kansas  
UTM Coordinates  
4/471070/  
4302230